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30 June 1955

NSC BRIEFING

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Redraft Thurs AM

ITALIAN GOVERNMENT PROSPECTS

I. In Italy, where the Scelba cabinet fell on 22 June, a prolonged period of maneuvering to form a new government is in prospect.

A. Former agriculture minister and native Sardinian Segni, a left-wing but personally Conservative Christian Democrat, was asked by President Gronchi on 26 June to form a new government. He has until today to reply.

1. If Segni decides to make the attempt, he will probably try to reconstitute the coalition with the minor center parties.

The center parties are, however, increasingly uneasy over their loss of popularity during their long period of association with the Christian Democrats and the stale-

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dated social reform program of the
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is an all-Christian Democrat cabinet based on parliamentary support from either the Monarchists or the Nenni Socialists.

1. Thus, odds about 60/40 that Segni might turn to Nenni for help.
2. Such a government, however, whether headed by Segni or another, would be beset by cleavages between the Christian Democratic party's left and right wings.
 - a. The left wing has predominated since the 1953 elections, but has not been able to maintain full discipline in the parliamentary group.
 - b. The right wing, where much of the wealth is concentrated, remains influential and along with the small Liberal party, has

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The Christian Democrats, who were
encouraged by their success in
the Sicilian elections of 5 June,
apparently hope to consolidate
their strength before next year's
local elections.

a. They may then decide to try
national elections during the
same year.

C. The period of instability thus in
prospect will probably mean no impor-
tant changes in foreign policy, but
continued delay is to be expected in
the Assembly's ratification of the
NATO Status of Forces agreement.